

3/29/2004 This Week In Congress

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March 29, 2004

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find this newsletter useful.

House Passes Budget Resolution

This week, the House of Representatives passed the budget resolution for 2005. This is the first step in the annual funding process. This resolution becomes the blueprint for the remainder of the year, dictating how much is spent on all the federal programs and departments. This year's budget freezes spending at last year's levels and is designed to cut the federal deficit in half during the next four years. This is important to note, as Congress needs to work harder to reduce our nation's deficit.

Attending the Congressional Arts Competition Awards Ceremony

On Saturday afternoon, I attended the 8th Annual Congressional Arts Competition Awards Ceremony at the Hays Arts Council in Hays. Each year, students from across the First Congressional District submit their artwork to the competition for judging. This year there were more than 100 entries for the competition.

This year's winner was JoAnna Hockersmith from Wheatland High School in Grainfield. The six runners-up were Jacob Wiard of Little River High School, Sandra Brown of Victoria High School, Lory Traugott of Smoky Valley High School in Lindsborg, Matt Worchester of Hill City High School, LeAnn Manhart of Wheatland High School in Grainfield and Ashley Mitchell of Great Bend High School. The students receiving honorable mention were Aubony Chalfant of Hill City High School, Joshua Seier of Lucas-Luray High School, Elizabeth DeBusk of Hays High School, Emily Voight of Smoky Valley High School in Lindsborg and Nicole Kennedy of Great Bend High School. Matt Worchester of Hill City High School also received an honorable mention, and Jodi Zimmerman of Wheatland High School in Grainfield received two honorable mentions. The winning artwork will be on display in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. for one year. In addition, the winning student will be invited to Washington, D.C. to take part in an awards ceremony with other students from across the nation.

I would like to thank the Hays Arts Council and Brenda Meder for their hard work in putting this year's competition together. I would also like to thank the judges and all of the students who submitted artwork. Ron Michael from the Birger Sandzen Art Gallery in Lindsborg and Michael Jilg from Fort Hays State University had a difficult job deciding on the winning pieces, as there was such a high quality of artwork.

House Transportation Committee Passes Highway Bill

On Wednesday, the House Transportation Committee passed a draft of the federal highway bill, which authorizes funding for federal highways, public transportation programs and safety initiatives for the next six years. The legislation now goes to the House floor for consideration this week. Kansas depends on the funding from the highway bill to maintain the state's roads, bridges and highways.

Meeting with "Big First" Legislators

On Monday, I met with state legislators from the First Congressional District. Each year, I meet with Kansas House and Senate members to discuss federal issues important to our state. It is important that our state and federal legislators work closely, as many of the things that happen on the federal level affect what happens in our state. This year the topics of discussion included streamlined sales tax, the federal highway bill and health care costs.

Discussing Agriculture Policy at Sparks National Conference

On Thursday morning, I spoke at the 12th Annual Food and Agriculture Conference in Washington, D.C. The event was hosted by Sparks Companies, Inc., who performs broad-based agricultural and commodity market research, analysis and consulting. As the Chairman of Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management, I spoke to the conference about crop insurance, trade agreements, conservation efforts and the future risk management.

For a full copy of the speech, visit my website at:
http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/ks01_moran/032504FoodAgConf.html.

Attending "Treachery at Cartilage Creek"

On Saturday evening, I attended the annual theatrical production of the Soroptimist International of Hays. Each year, businesswomen from Hays and the Ellis County communities perform a production to raise funds for local charities, such as the Northwest Kansas Family Shelter and the Mary Elizabeth Maternity Home. The funds also go toward scholarships for women returning to college. This year's production was "Treachery at Cartilage Creek," a melodramatic play about the citizens of Cartilage Creek protecting their water rights from the evil Colonel Bogus Rancidview. Lisa Dethloff, a constituent services representative in my Hays District Office, played the part of Ms. Crystal Clear.

In the Office

On Tuesday, Dr. Robert and Wanda Morrison of Hutchinson were in on behalf of the American Association of Orthodontists to discuss health care. Members of Kansas 4-H, in Washington, D.C. attending the National 4-H Conference, visited, including Melissa Yarrow of Morganville and Susan Schlichting, a 4-H Youth Development Sponsor from Hays. Judy Cundiff of Medicine Lodge, Rose Crum of Sublette and Ginger Dody of Emporia were in on behalf of the National Association of Postmasters to discuss postal reform.

Jim Berglund, with Sunflower Bank in Salina, and other members of the Kansas Bankers Association were in to discuss federal deposit insurance reform and regulatory relief. Dr. Randall Brown from Marysville was in to talk about the future of rural health care, and Michelle Strong of Junction City visited on behalf of the Konza Prairie Community Health Center to discuss Medicaid reform.

In for a tour of the Capitol this week were several families from Marysville and the surrounding communities, including Max, Patricia, Shannon and Shane Searcey; Kenneth and Ruth Wetter; Dallas Leonard; Scott Kramer; Bryan Wassenberg; Randall, Sherry and Nicole Brown; and Kimberly and Haylee Houtz. With them were Cassandra Fisher;

Melissa and Marie Fett; Shannon Voet of Home; Donald and Kelma Frohberg of Waterville; Jason Smith of Seneca; and John and Rosealie Meybrunn of Summerfield.

Students and faculty from the Kensington, Logan, Northen Valley and Eastern Heights high schools were in for a tour, including Jacey Barnes, Nicole Haskett, Ashley Schmid, Eula Shores, Ryan Bose, Micah Bronson, Zach Lamont, Trenton Palmer, Kerry Ellis, Leah Kuhlmann, Catlin Lehmann, Lindsey Graham, Julie Griffin, Mercedes Hays, Jayme Horacek, and Laci Rahjes. Also on the tour were Ashley Simpson, Joseph Haskett, Zackary Sammons, Melba Hagman, Veraline Schooler, Lavon Kats, Barbara Dennis and Tad Felts.

Richard and Becky Polcyn of Russell, and their granddaughters, Amanda and Emily Engel, were in for a tour, as were Nathan, Debbie, Brandon, Cody and Keenan Toll of Hutchinson. Ingeborg Teasley of Abilene, Marvin and Marsha Tischhauser of Wilsey and Mark, Joyce and Andrew Conard of Hutchinson were all in for a tour, as were Jeff and Cindy Tarr of Emporia and Dan, Bonnie and Brandon Daley of Salina.

Very truly yours,

Jerry